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ABSTRACT

This packet of materials was developed by the members of a joint task force of librarians from school, public, and college libraries in Ohio as a means of facilitating closer cooperation in defining library instructional goals and activities. It begins with a discussion of the need for such cooperation and suggested roles for classroom teachers and school administrators; faculty involved in teacher training programs in colleges and universities; and school librarians and media specialists. A chart showing specific learning tasks that build the basic information-seeking competencies is then presented which suggests applications at the high school and college levels, emphasizing the articulation or fit between the two levels and the shared concerns and common objectives of instruction librarians. Also included are guides to library vocabulary, a search strategy sampler, and subject periodical indexes for college-bound high school students. (BBM)

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BASIC INFORMATION-SEEKING COMPETENCIES: HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

OLA/ALAO/OELMA Joint Task Force on Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Library Instruction, High School to College

April 1990

Ohio Library Association (OLA)
Academic Library Association of Ohio (ALAO)
Ohio Educational Library/Media Association (OELMA)

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OLA/ALAO/OELMA Joint Task Force on Implementing the Recommendations
of the Task Force on Library Instruction, High School to College
April 1990

Basic Information-Seeking Competencies: High School to College

A sage once wrote that if hungry people are given fish, their immediate needs are cared for, but if they are taught to fish, their future survival is assured. Librarian-educators believe that research skills or information-seeking competencies, like the basic survival skills referred to in the proverb, are the most important components in the well-equipped learner's tool kit.

To acquire skills of any type, a learner must master basic concepts, then practice their application in tasks that are progressively more complex. Information-seeking skills are no exception to this general rule. These fundamental competencies must be particularly emphasized at the secondary level through significant, repeated exposures to instruction and to practice if students are to be prepared for the rigors of college level instruction.

Students most often arrive at the college library unprepared to cope with the most basic research projects assigned by instructors. While information-seeking skills may be briefly touched on as a part of the high school curriculum, they are not usually stressed and few opportunities for practice of foundational skills are provided by classroom teachers. Further, there is a demonstrated need for librarians providing instruction at the high school and the college levels to communicate concerns and to work together to plan articulated programs.

To facilitate discussion and spur action on this important need, the Task Force prepared the attached chart showing specific learning tasks that build the basic information-seeking competencies. The schema emphasizes the articulation or fit between high school and college research skills instruction and the shared concerns and common objectives of instruction librarians. The Task Force also prepared guides to library vocabulary, to periodical indexes for the high school library, and to basic search strategies to accompany the competency chart. Request copies of these materials from the Chair, listed below.

Classroom teachers and school administrators are urged to respond to the challenge of building true life-long learning skills. Since one exposure is rarely sufficient to teach any new concept, teachers should make student research and information-gathering a regular part of your lesson plans and work with library specialists to design interesting and effective lessons that foster the basic competencies described here.

Faculty involved in teacher training programs in colleges and universities should also incorporate information-seeking skills as a basic element of the curriculum for future teachers and media specialists. If these individuals master basic skills, they will be empowered to foster their growth in pupils.

School librarians and media specialists are encouraged to share this document with faculty and to form communication networks with local college and public librarians in order to plan and present instructional programs that will really enable students to succeed.

Contact any member of the Task Force for further information or to share reactions and comments.

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Basic Information-Seeking Competencies: High School to College

Basic Competency:	Application: High School Instruction*	Application: College Instruction **
1. Organization of information in various formats	• Understand that current information appears first in periodical publications, later in books and reference materials. • Understand that information sources may be produced in printed, audiovisual, and computerized forms. • Practice making distinctions between popular and scholarly sources, and between general and specialized sources.	• Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources and that how these terms are applied varies with disciplines. • Exposure to a wide variety of automated information sources, including those with no print counterparts.
2. Classification schemes	• Understand that classification systems are used to arrange library collections by subject. While high school and public libraries often use the Dewey Decimal system, many colleges use the Library of Congress system. • Learn that call numbers are locating devices. Use them to browse by subject.	• Learn the purpose and use of specialized schemes, such as SuDoc, or classified schemes used in certain reference tools.
3. Controlled vocabulary	• Learn the purpose and use of commonly used vocabularies, such as Sears and Library of Congress subject headings. • Practice selecting broad/narrow search terms.	• Learn the purpose and use of specialized thesauri, such as ERIC descriptors, and use of keywords in searching. • Practice using subdivisions and combining search concepts, using Boolean logic.
4. Search strategy	• Understand and apply basic systematic search strategy, moving from general to specific information sources. • Practice using background information sources such as general and specialized encyclopedias to focus a topic, develop search vocabulary. • Learn to assess and match information needs to types of information sources.	• New research may appear first in letters to the editor, newsletters, conference papers, electronic communications. Learn variations in information seeking patterns as they apply to different academic disciplines. • Practice alternate search strategies based on: tracing citations, moving from primary to secondary sources, following the publication sequence in a field.
5. Use of basic access tools: catalogs, bibliographies, periodical indexes	• Elements of catalog data can appear in various forms in print, online catalogs (OPACs). • Practice basic search techniques for different catalog access points (author, subject, title, etc.) • Learn to use bibliographies published as parts of other works or separately to locate information. • Become familiar with basic periodical and news indexes, such as *Readers' Guide*, with elements of citations, and with using current periodicals. Understand that there are many different subject periodical indexes. • Learn to use books' indexes and contents lists to locate useful chapters or sections in works.	• Practice basic search techniques in the library's catalogs, print and/or OPAC. • Learn to use other computerized information sources, such as CD-ROM products that permit Boolean searches. • Become familiar with a variety of specialized periodical indexes and abstracting sevices and with techniques for locating journals in the college library.
6. Evaluation of information resources	• Use of biographical sources to learn about authors' credentials. • Introduction to accuracy, bias concerns and uses of/rationale for documentation.	• Use of citation indexes, specialized tools to locate reviews, evaluate the credibility of arguments.
7. Librarian/libraries as information resources	• Introduction to resources outside local school library; collections/services in college libraries.	• Use of interlibrary loan, special collections, online database searches to extend access.

* See also: *Dig Into Learning: The Ohio Library Media and Information Skills Course of Study, K-12*, Columbus: OELMA, 1983.

**See also: ACRL/BIS Model Statement of Objectives for Academic Bibliographic Instruction in *College & Research Libraries*, May 1987.

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OLA/ALAO/OELMA Joint Task Force on Implementing the Recommendations
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High School to College

Basic Library/Research Vocabulary for College-Bound High School Students

BIBLIOGRAPHY - A list of books or other published writings on a subject or by a particular author.

BIOGRAPHY - A written account of a person's life. Biographical reference sources either contain these accounts or help to locate them.

CATALOG - A list that records, describes, and indexes the resources of a library or collection of materials. The list may be printed on cards (card catalog), reproduced on microforms, or stored on a computer.

CITATION - The written information about a book or article needed to locate the item. A citation, sometimes called a "reference," usually includes author, title, pages, and date of publication. Citations for articles in magazines or journals include additional information.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM - A system used by libraries to bring materials on a subject or works by an author together. The system uses numbers or a combination of letters and numbers in a sort of code to specify subject area and author's name. These codes are call numbers. They are printed on labels attached to materials.

DOCUMENTATION - Evidence, usually in the form of footnotes or other types of citations, that supports written arguments or indicates sources from which direct quotes or indirect paraphrases have been taken from another's work. Pieces of information in citations (author, title) may be arranged in a various formats or styles.

ENCYCLOPEDIA - A reference source containing information on a variety of terms, persons, events. This information may be supplied in short paragraphs or in lengthy articles that include citations to other works on the same topic. Encyclopedias can be general, covering all topics, or specialized, focusing on a particular discipline such as art or philosophy.

INDEX - A systematically arranged list that refers users to other parts of a work or to other sources. An index at the end of a book refers the user to other parts of that book which provide information on the term indexed. A periodical index is a reference source that lists articles in magazines, newspapers, or scholarly journals. Entries or citations are usually arranged by subject and by author and provide the information needed to locate articles.

JOURNAL - A periodical, often published by an institution or a professional society. Journals usually contain articles written by scholars or experts on a subject. These articles tend to focus on research and theory in a discipline. Journal articles are indexed by subject in periodical indexes.

MAGAZINE - A periodical published for the lay person containing articles on general subjects. Magazine articles are indexed by subject in periodical indexes.

PERIODICAL - A publication issued at regular intervals, often daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Publication will continue indefinitely, unlike books, which are published only once. Periodicals are also called "serials." Magazines, journals, and newspapers are all types of periodicals.

SEARCH STRATEGY - A systematic process used to find the most relevant information on a topic. During this process, one considers all potentially useful reference sources, selects works appropriate for the research need, locates information in these works, and evaluates the relevance of the information found. Search strategies may vary, depending on the topic researched and the amount of information needed.

SUBJECT HEADING - A word or phrase used to describe the content of a work. Subject headings, sometimes called subject terms, are used in many catalogs and other reference sources such as periodical indexes. Subject headings can be broad and general, like "music," or narrow and specific, like "American folk music."

Adapted from: *University Survey: A Guidebook and Readings for New Students*, Ohio State University, 1989.

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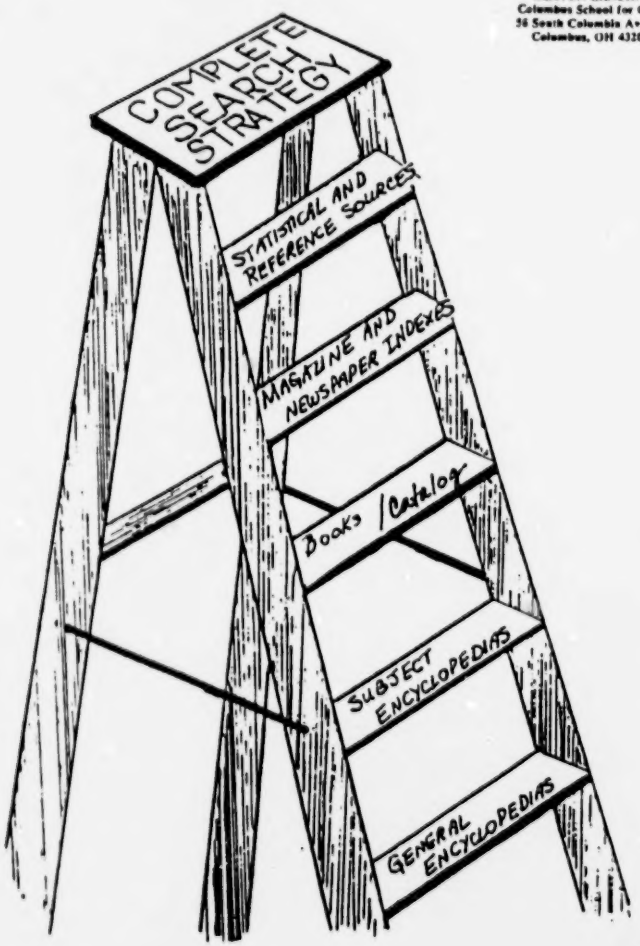
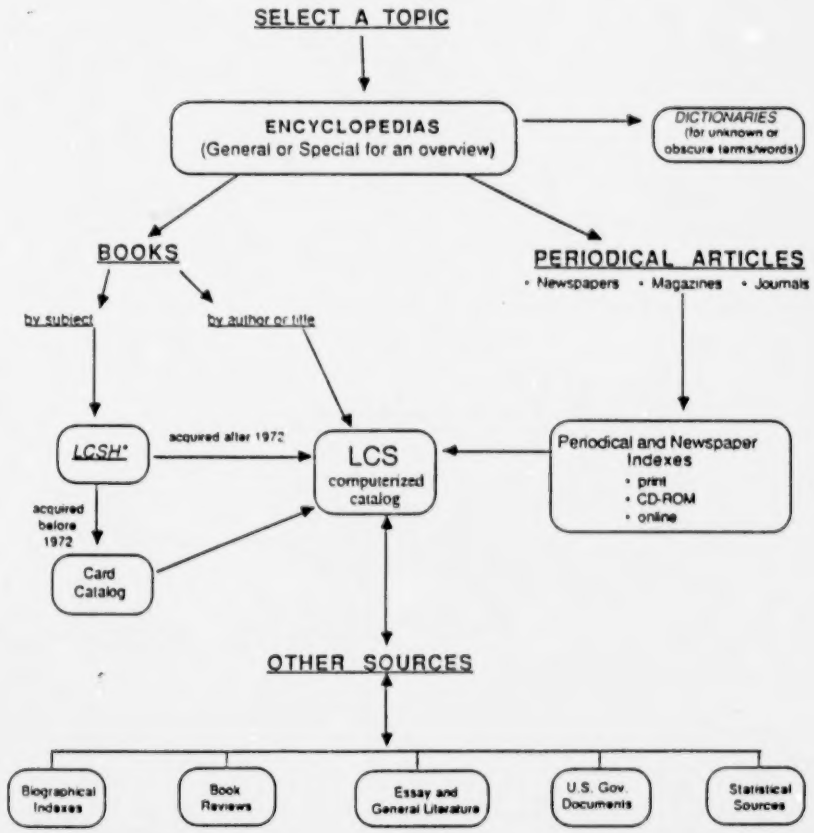
Search Strategy Sampler

STAIRWAY (well...sort of) TO SUCCESS (relatively speaking...)



From: Columbus School for Girls Library



LCS provides only information about location and availability of books and journals; it does not list individual journal articles.

* *Library of Congress Subject Headings*

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From: Ohio State University Libraries

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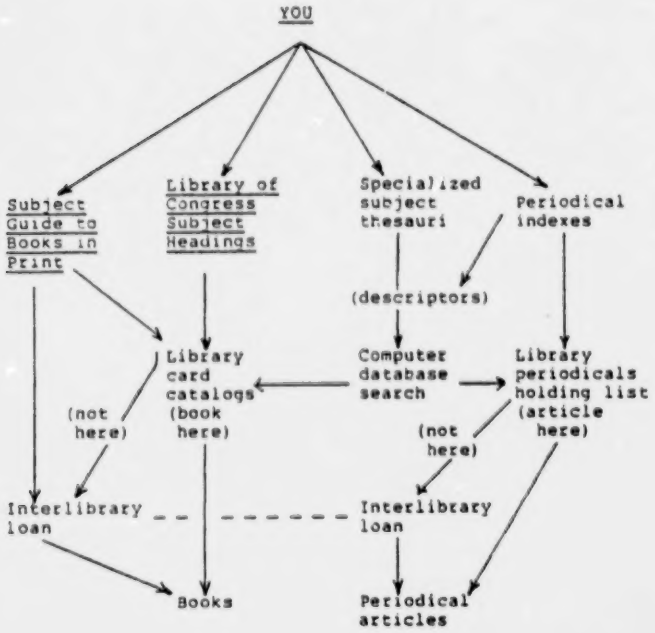
Malone College Management Program
LIBRARY RESEARCH AND COMPUTER SEARCH MODULE

THE LIBRARY RESEARCH PROCESS

(How to Get to Your Sources)



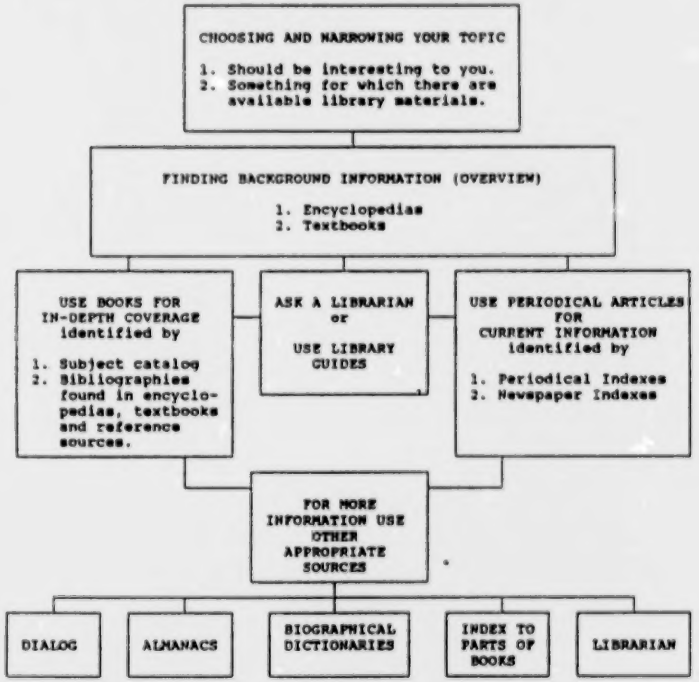
This chart of the library research process summarizes the steps you need to take to get books and periodical articles once you have clarified your topic.

Copyright, 1985, Stanford Terhune, Malone College Library

From: Malone College Library

SEARCH STRATEGY

A SEARCH STRATEGY IS A PLAN OR A WAY TO CONDUCT A SEARCH FOR INFORMATION
Read through the following possible "routes".


CHOOSING AND NARROWING YOUR TOPIC
1. Should be interesting to you.
2. Something for which there are available library materials.
FINDING BACKGROUND INFORMATION (OVERVIEW)
1. Encyclopedias
2. Textbooks
USE BOOKS FOR IN-DEPTH COVERAGE identified by
1. Subject catalog
2. Bibliographies found in encyclopedias, textbooks and reference sources.
ASK A LIBRARIAN or USE LIBRARY GUIDES
USE PERIODICAL ARTICLES FOR CURRENT INFORMATION identified by
1. Periodical Indexes
2. Newspaper Indexes
FOR MORE INFORMATION USE OTHER APPROPRIATE SOURCES
DIALOG
ALMANACS
BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARIES
INDEX TO PARTS OF BOOKS
LIBRARIAN

From: Shawnee State University Library

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Beyond the *Readers' Guide:* Subject Periodical Indexes for College-Bound High School Students

One of the key research skills that all students should learn and practice before college is how to find appropriate articles in periodicals. These modestly priced print indexes have been identified by college librarians as particularly important and should be considered for purchase by high school libraries for research and instructional use in addition to the basic general index, *Readers' Guide*. Often cooperative arrangements can be made with local college and/or larger public libraries to allow high school students access to the journal articles they have located in indexes.

Biography Index leads students to information sources about people from every field and every age. This is a name index to biographical material found in periodical articles, books, interviews, obituaries, works of fiction, and juvenile literature. Includes a separate index to professions and occupations. Quarterly, with annual and two-year cumulations.
(H.W. Wilson, ISSN: 0006-3053)

General Science Index, designed for students and non-specialists, offers plain language subject access to articles in science periodicals. Useful for a wide variety of student research projects on astronomy, biology, chemistry, earth sciences, environment, food and nutrition, medicine/health, physics. Monthly and quarterly, with annual cumulations.
(H.W. Wilson, ISSN: 0162-19[illegible]3)

Humanities Index provides subject and author access to English language periodicals, with extensive cross references. Useful for student research projects related to literary themes, motifs, genres, and authors, history, the arts, and religious studies. Quarterly, with annual cumulations.
(H.W. Wilson, ISSN: 0095-5981)

Social Sciences Index offers subject and author access to English language periodicals in such fields as anthropology, economics, ethnic studies, law and criminology, minority studies, politics, psychology, social welfare, urban studies. These journal articles can supply important information for student research projects on a wide variety of current events and social studies topics. Quarterly, with annual cumulations.
(H.W. Wilson, ISSN: 0094-4920)

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